

March 10, 2010

Chairwoman Lowe and  
Members of the Texas State Board of Education  
1701 N. Congress Avenue  
Austin, Texas, 78701

Dear Chairwoman Lowe and Board Members:

As you move into the final stages of your revision to the state's social studies curriculum standards (TEKS), we, the undersigned civil rights organization officials and representatives, urge you to adopt standards that present a historically accurate and complete account of the struggle for civil rights in our nation's history. While this may sound like a self-evident request, we are concerned that the curriculum adoption process has been polluted by political efforts to whitewash American civil rights history and downplay the determined efforts of various ethnic groups to achieve basic liberties.

Specifically, the following changes – or proposed changes – to the social studies standards represent a disturbing undercurrent of animosity toward individuals and organizations involved in the civil rights movement.

- **The insulting claim that gains in civil rights were granted by majorities, not earned by the courageous efforts of women and minorities**

*This misleading claim first appeared in the formal review submitted by board-appointed expert David Barton. Then at the board's September 2009 meeting, board member Don McLeroy gave instruction to curriculum writing teams to make clear that "it wasn't minorities that got the Civil Rights Act; it was the majority that did it." Other board members and expert reviewers have repeated this offensive view.*

- **Minimizing efforts by ethnic minorities and women to win equal economic opportunities and political rights**

*An amendment adopted at the January 2010 board meeting changed a standard requiring students to "explain actions taken by people from racial, ethnic, gender, and religious groups to expand economic opportunities and political rights in American society" by **removing** the words "from racial, ethnic, gender, and religious groups."*

- **Denigrating the impact of the civil rights movement in America**

*An amendment distributed by a board member at the January 2010 meeting – but not yet voted on – states that the civil rights movement created "unrealistic expectations for equal outcomes." The stated justification for this addition is to correct a "politically correct view" of the civil rights movement.*

These subjective, biased revisions turn the very notion of civil rights on its head, ignoring the clear historical record of organizing by women and ethnic minorities to gain equal rights in the

face of majority opposition. It would be an insult to those Americans who sacrificed so much – in some cases, their lives – for the cause of civil rights to present this skewed view of history in our public school classrooms. Doing so would also be a terrible disservice to the next generation of Texas students of all races and ethnicities. They would be robbed of the powerful history of our country’s long and continuing battle to overcome discrimination and secure the rights, freedom and equality of all Americans.

In our effort to guarantee that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is included in textbooks used in our classrooms in the grade-appropriate Social Studies/TEKS curriculum currently in review, we refer you to the United States Government TEKS curriculum Sec. C: “Knowledge and Skills”, Item #17 “Culture” “part a.” **which states:** a) evaluate a U.S. Government policy or court decision that has affected a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group *such as* the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the U.S Supreme Court cases of Hernandez v. Texas and Grutter v. Bollinger...

We urge you approve changing U.S. Government/TEKS curriculum Sec. C “Knowledge and Skills”, Item# 17 “Culture” “part a.” **to read:** a) evaluate a U.S. Government policy or court decision that has affected a particular racial, ethnic, or religious group *including* the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the U.S Supreme Court cases of Hernandez v. Texas and Grutter v. Bollinger...

We urge you to undo the damage already done by these biased amendments and resist further efforts to rewrite and weaken the history of the struggle for civil rights in this country.

We appreciate your consideration of our views, and thank you for your service to the students of Texas.

Respectfully,

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Mrs. Marvinette Smith, President, San Antonio Branch of the NAACP, member organization of National Alliance For Education (NAFE)

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Mrs. Rosa Rosales, National President League of United Latin American Citizens-LULAC  
Chairperson of the National Alliance For Education (NAFE)

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Mr. Placido Salazar, National Executive Secretary of the American G.I. Forum, Co-Chairperson of the National Alliance For Education (NAFE)

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Mr. Cruz Chavira, Co-Chairperson National Alliance For Education (NAFE)